



Saint Paul Planning Commission

City Hall Conference Center Room 40

15 Kellogg Boulevard West

Steering Committee Meeting – 8:00 a.m., Room 41

Christopher B. Coleman,
Mayor

Agenda

February 21, 2014

8:30 – 11:00 a.m.

Saint Paul
Planning Commission

Chair

Barbara A. Wencil

First Vice Chair

Elizabeth Reveal

Second Vice Chair

Paula Merrigan

Secretary

Daniel Ward II

I. Approval of minutes of January 24, 2014.

II. Chair's Announcements

III. Planning Director's Announcements

IV. Zoning Committee

SITE PLAN REVIEW – List of current applications. (*Tom Beach, 651/266-9086*)

NO BUSINESS

V. Comprehensive Planning Committee

VI. Neighborhood Planning Committee

VII. Transportation Committee

Citywide Streetcar Feasibility Study – Approve resolution recommending adoption of the long-term network of feasible streetcar lines and authorization for staff to proceed to a more detailed study of the starter line. (*Michelle Beaulieu, 651/266-6620*)

VIII. Communications Committee

IX. Task Force/Liaison Reports

X. Old Business

Parking Policy Retreat Follow-up Discussion – Reflections on what we heard and implications for future policy.

XI. New Business

XII. Adjournment

Planning Director
Donna Drummond

Information on agenda items being considered by the Planning Commission and its committees can be found at www.stpaul.gov/ped, click on Planning.

Planning Commission Members: PLEASE call Sonja Butler, 651/266-6573, if unable to attend.

**Saint Paul Planning Commission &
Heritage Preservation Commission**
MASTER MEETING CALENDAR

WEEK OF FEBRUARY 17-21, 2014

Mon (17) OFFICE CLOSED



Tues (18)

3:30- Comprehensive Planning Committee
5:00 p.m. (Merritt Clapp-Smith, 651/266-6547)

13th Floor – CHA
25 Fourth Street West

West Midway Plan and Working Agreement draft – (Allen Lovejoy, 651/266-6226)

Weds (19)

Thurs (20)

Fri (21)

8:00 a.m. Planning Commission Steering Committee
(Donna Drummond, 651/266-6556)

Room 41 City Hall
Conference Center
15 Kellogg Blvd.

8:30- Planning Commission Meeting
11:00 a.m. (Donna Drummond, 651/266-6556)

Room 40 City Hall
Conference Center
15 Kellogg Blvd.

Zoning..... SITE PLAN REVIEW – List of current applications. (Tom Beach, 651/266-9086)

NO BUSINESS

Transportation Committee..... Citywide Streetcar Feasibility Study – Approve resolution recommending adoption of the long-term network of feasible streetcar lines and authorization for staff to proceed to a more detailed study of the starter line. (Michelle Beaulieu, 651/266-6620)

Old Business..... Parking Policy Retreat Follow-up Discussion – Reflections on what we heard and implications for future policy.

**Saint Paul Planning Commission
City Hall Conference Center
15 Kellogg Boulevard West**

Minutes January 24, 2014

A meeting of the Planning Commission of the City of Saint Paul was held Friday, January 24, 2014, at 8:30 a.m. in the Conference Center of City Hall.

Commissioners Present: Mmes. Noecker, Reveal, Shively, Thao, Wang, Wencl; and Messrs. Edgerton, Gelgelu, Lindeke, Makarios, Nelson, Ochs, Oliver, Ward, and Wickiser.

Commissioners Absent: Mmes. *Merrigan, *Perrus, *Porter, and Messrs. *Connolly, *Schertler, and *Spaulding.

Absent: *Excused

Also Present: Donna Drummond, Planning Director; Sara Swenson, Allen Lovejoy, Merritt Clapp-Smith, Bill Dermody, Michelle Beaulieu, Hilary Holmes, Jamie Radel, and Sonja Butler, Department of Planning and Economic Development staff.

I. Approval of minutes January 10, 2014.

MOTION: Commissioner Reveal moved approval of the minutes of January 10, 2014. Commissioner Thao seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.

II. Chair's Announcements

Report of the Nominating Committee and Election of Officers.

Commissioner Shively reported on behalf of the Nominating Committee. The committee offered the following slate of officers: Barbara A. Wencl for Chair, Elizabeth Reveal for First Vice-Chair, Paula Merrigan for Second Vice Chair, and Daniel Ward, II for Secretary.

Chair Wencl called for nominations from the floor. There were none.

MOTION: Commissioner Shively moved to approve the slate of candidates. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.

III. Planning Director's Announcements

Donna Drummond announced that the Mayor's nomination of two new planning commissioners was approved by City Council the previous Wednesday. Wendy Underwood and Anne DeJoy will be sworn in on February 7, 2014. A summary of the parking retreat that the Commission held after the January 10th meeting was distributed. At the February 7th time will be set aside on the agenda for the Commission to discuss what it heard at the retreat and potential follow-up actions it would like to take.

IV. PUBLIC HEARING: Saint Paul Streetcar Feasibility Study – Item from the Transportation Committee. (*Michelle Beaulieu, 651/266-6620*).

Chair Wencil announced that the Saint Paul Planning Commission was holding a public hearing on the Saint Paul Streetcar Feasibility Study. Notice of the public hearing was published in the Legal Ledger January 9, 2014, and was sent to the citywide Early Notification System list and other interested parties.

Michelle Beaulieu, PED staff gave a brief presentation on the Streetcar study. She talked about why the study was done, and addressed some questions that came up the last time this was at the Planning Commission and at the open houses held last week.

Ms. Beaulieu briefly reviewed the results of the study. She also noted that 277 comments were received, including from Open Saint Paul, the four open houses, and several letters and emails. Approximately 30% were negative comments, 63% were positive, and 7% were neither negative nor positive, but questioning.

Commissioner Ward asked for more information about how development potential for the proposed streetcar routes was analyzed.

Ms. Beaulieu said that they did a preliminary analysis of what the development potential would be along these corridors. The study looked at potential major development sites where they could expect to see dense and mixed use development and they also looked at the potential for property values to increase along those corridors.

Commissioner Makarios asked if the public comments that had been received had been incorporated into this draft of the study.

Ms. Beaulieu said that the second phase of the overall study did have a community comment section, the final phase did not because they had their open houses recently and they wanted to get this public hearing set as close to those open houses as possible. However, a copy of all the public comments received to date was distributed to the commissioners today. These will all be summarized, along with the public hearing comments, for consideration by the Transportation Committee and the Commission.

Chair Wencil read the rules of procedure for the public hearing.

The following people spoke.

1. Kirk Thoren, a Saint Paul resident, asked a question before giving his testimony. Mr. Thoren said that Ms. Beaulieu mentioned something about streetcars being able to do cross flow traffic; he asked how that will work on University Avenue.

Ms. Beaulieu said that he must be referring to streetcars operating in mixed traffic and what that means is that they are in the same travel lane as cars, buses, freight trucks etc. This is different from what is seen on University Avenue, where the light rail is in a dedicated lane and no other vehicles can travel in that lane. Streetcar tracks are imbedded in the roadway, similar to the way the light rail tracks are embedded at intersections so that cars can cross them safely.

Kirk Thoren said the City paid this company a sum of around one hundred fifty thousand dollars to see the feasibility of putting in streetcars in our corridors. He continued to say we don't need to have excessive spending on frivolous public transport ideas that are not needed. More money could be spent on roads for people that pay to put their cars on them. (Mr. Thoren also submitted a written copy of his testimony.)

2. Harold Buss, a Saint Paul resident, said that he attended one of the meetings and this study is a very good study, however he has a lot of problems with it. He said this is not an investment; none of us would ever invest this kind of money and know that you're not going to get money back on it. At that meeting someone said what about safety, why do people not ride buses they're afraid for their safety. And someone else said streetcars don't have that problem because it's nostalgia, and if I'm a hoodlum I don't care about nostalgia I'll do robbing whenever I want. Also from 7th Street coming into downtown there will be buses and streetcars together plus all the cars and that does not make any sense. The City cannot continue to spend money that we can't get anything back on, we are taxed to the max in Saint Paul and it's time to quit doing this kind of thing.
3. Peter Berglund lives in Shoreview, is employed in Saint Paul, and previously has resided in Saint Paul. He uses buses all the time. To show his credentials he presented 150 bus passes dating back to 1984. He said that streetcars are not bad, but they are expensive. He is happy with the buses because buses have improved a lot over the decades; they are warmer in the winter, cooler in the summer, and the seats are better - everything's better. In order to work the best the mass transit system's vehicles need to run quickly and frequently. We have a limited number of dollars and however those limited dollars can be spent best to get frequent and fast trips is what's most important. (Mr. Berglund also submitted written testimony.)
4. Bob Plaster said he is a long time Saint Paul resident and he has seen streetcars, has ridden streetcars, and has seen everything torn up to be replaced with buses and now you want to redo that. The main thing is where does the funding come from? It's really all from the taxpayer. Mr. Plaster asked: Who advanced this idea of streetcars?

Ms. Beaulieu said that the City Council passed a resolution to begin the Streetcar Feasibility Study and that the Mayor also supported it. The Streetcar Feasibility Study was funded about 85% by foundation grants, with the remainder split between the City and Ramsey County.

Mr. Plaster said we will all be taxed for this, and not everybody rides those things. That type of public transportation is good for cities like New York and San Francisco that don't have open spaces. The buses that we are using right now are really a top end bus and they built a huge garage facility on Mississippi Street and all that stuff would be going down the tubes. We just can't spend money that we don't have.

5. Bill Hosko is a resident and business owner in downtown Saint Paul. He has not owned a vehicle in twenty years and relies on walking and using Metro Transit buses for day-to-day transportation. He noted the extensive existing bus service that is available, and asked about the impacts to existing on-street parking. He expressed doubts about the economic development impacts and concerns about the cost of streetcars for the benefit received. He thought the existing bus service could be made more attractive by addressing bus rider behavior. He said that light rail transit to from downtown to the airport and Mall of

American should be considered instead. (Mr. Hosko submitted a written copy of his testimony.)

6. Bill Heime a business owner was not able to attend this public hearing so he submitted a letter, which Mr. Hosko read. Mr. Heime is very concerned about the loss of on-street parking for his business, and instead of streetcars on West 7th and in other areas of the city where streetcars are being studied he believes consideration should be given to having smaller buses serving the public. Perhaps they can be powered by electricity or natural gas and make them look like old-time streetcars and have them be open air in the summer. Mr. Heime believes that his business and others on West 7th Street cannot afford to lose their on-street parking. (Mr. Heime submitted a written copy of his testimony.)
7. Mark Bayuk, a Saint Paul resident, said that East 7th Street doesn't look like much right now, not too much economic development; in fact it's kind of an economic waste land. There's bus 61 and 64 and it's still an economic waste land, bus 70 and 74 there's no change. No matter how many buses you have running down East 7th corridor it's not going to make any impact on the future improvement of East 7th Street. He knows from studies and experiences people have had in other cities streetcars do bring development. He strongly believes that streetcars will bring economic development. He believes it is also a more sophisticated, more developed transportation system and that gives you an ability to compete for human capital attraction. We want to bring people here who are mobile and live in downtown urban areas; we have to make the downtown attractive. He believes the streetcar in a very critical corridor will help enhance the livability of our downtown urban area and allow Minnesota companies who want to attract people to work here from other regions to say look at what we've got. So come here and work for us and help develop the Twin Cities into an international economic competitor.
8. Bob Rohland, a resident of Saint Paul, said that his biggest concern is the energy efficiency. His background is energy production, primarily electricity, with 33 years at a nuclear power plant. His comments were about the energy required for this system, not just the streetcars but buses as well. The concern is about oil, and global world oil production. The current declining rate of all global world oil is at about 6% a year, and for most of the counties that export oil that is their primary income. The US Defense Department has come out with several reports in the last 6 years talking about their concern about global world oil production. Bottom line the days of cheap oil are gone. In 2005 the CEO of Chevron came out with a full page ad in papers across the country talking about this very fact, that the days of cheap oil are gone. So whatever the City decides to do it has to be energy efficient.
9. Gregg Rosenberger has owned a business on West 7th Street for over 40 years, and he said that he see's buses go by every day and he has never seen a full bus, especially in the morning, maybe in the afternoon. They run about every 15-20 minutes. Another thing is that there is a huge amount of cars that come from the local area and outside the city and they come in through East 7th Street because it is such a main artery. He cannot see how there will be room for another object like a streetcar to be driven up and down those streets. Another issue is snow removal, start throwing that into the equation with the trains and it just doesn't seem practical. Also can somebody in the City show us folks what the bus company is making for money, are we working in a deficit, are we showing a profit and when are we going to show a profit so that maybe we can afford to have another vehicle to move people around in. Cars are not going to go away. About the federal funding, where does this federal funding come from? Our government is just about belly up right now and the cities are not

too far behind. Ramsey County and Saint Paul being the capitol city, the people in this city need to sit down and figure out a plan that the rest of the country and the rest of the states can actually say we're surprised that this city did something to teach the rest of the people how to spend money wisely.

Ms. Beaulieu said that fare box returns cover about 30% of the operating cost of the buses in the Metro Transit system, and that fare box returns cover about 40% of the operating costs of the Light Rail in the Metro Transit system.

10. Lisa Radzak, Managing Director of Public Affairs & Government Relations for Minnesota Public Radio, said with respect to the downtown alignment they know that a lot more work needs to be done and there are many options still to be looked at and studied. They have concerns about any potential alignment that would run along the south part of their building on West 7th Street connecting West 7th Street from the east and West 7th Street from the west. In 2008 MPR opposed the proposed alignment for the light rail to come down Cedar Street between 12 and 14 feet from their building. Preliminary test results are showing that the system that the Met Council designed and constructed has been successful in mitigating the noise and vibration from the trains themselves, which is good news. However it is not successfully mitigating the noise and vibration from the traffic running along West 7th Street particularly as it crosses over the tracks at Cedar and West 7th. They are experiencing serious problems in the recording studio along the south part of their building along West 7th that is why they are opposed to any alignment of this that would go there. They understand that it's a little more tedious to figure out a solution than anyone could have imagined; it's taken about a year and they still do not know how it will be fixed. So she asked that this be considered with the streetcar planning. (Written comments were received from MPR)
11. David Dermer, a Saint Paul resident, said that as far as he knows there isn't a complete plan, man power, equipment or budget for removing snow on University. He has seen SUV's getting tied up on the hard crusted snow in the last few weeks. And if there are several storms that would drop a lot of snow, he doesn't know what the City would do, in the past it was left up to the business owners to hire a bobcat operator and it took about 2 weeks to clear all of the snow. He would like to see the City push Met Council for low cost or now cost alternatives. Also he never has seen taxis brought up as a viable source of mass transit or strategies for using taxis with mass transit. Right now University Avenue does not have cab stands and people getting off the bus along University would be able to come up to a taxi that's parked maybe 20 feet away from the bus stop. He would like to see bump outs for cabs, expand the number of cab stands, taxis should have the right of egress and taxis pay for themselves.
12. Tabitha BenciDurango with the Dayton's Bluff Community Council, said while listening to all of the comments today she felt that she would interject a few things that are happening on the eastside of Saint Paul to help round out the picture of why or why not streetcars on the eastside of Saint Paul. There is a legitimate concern about funding for the projects that comes up constantly in community meetings and gatherings held on the eastside. However there are many people on the eastside of Saint Paul that are transit dependent who do not have cars and have stated that the bus system is very inefficient for them to use. East 7th is a state highway for the eastside. It runs through one of their bigger commercial corridors, right now there are millions of dollars invested in that corridor from Metro State University down to the Beacon Bluff site. For example: Metro State has put in proposals to do \$66 million worth of development on their sites on East 7th Street in the next 5-10 years. There are many different

things happening block by block such as economic development activities happening. East 7th Street does present itself to be the perfect corridor for some type of transit. If a transit opportunity were to appear for East 7th the streetcars are going to be the least invasive way to keep parking for those businesses, because they allow for tracks in the roadway that other cars can travel with. Ms. BenciDurango wants the Commission, Chairperson and the people here to be aware that there are many things happening that are not visible now and in order to complete these pictures of economic development and adding economic sustainability to our neighborhoods we need to think about what mass transit may or may not do in that realm.

13. Leslie DuClue resides on 7th Street West so his place would not be affected yet and that is what he is concerned about. The property he purchased is at Montreal and Lexington, "the intersection of death;" it is very dangerous and there are accidents all the time. He has had two cars run up on his property lately. He cannot believe if a streetcar goes to Randolph that it won't eventually extend to the Mall of America. Even though it's everything to the contrary of what's been said he's concerned about a decrease in his home value on his first home. He does not believe in the potential business growth based on streetcars or light rail as seen in Minnesota. The public transit system in Minnesota is terrible and it needs to be better. His wife has epilepsy and she is very active in the Epilepsy Foundation of Minnesota and she does rely on public transportation but what she has seen with the light rail coming is that the number of bus lines has decreased rather than increased. In fact her bus is being cut out, the route #144 from the University of Minnesota, so she is going to be forced to take route #54 and she would actually be affected by this as well. He is opposed to the streetcars and not a big fan of the light rail. What should be done and is more cost effective is to look at how our bus system could become more efficient, more energy efficient buses and increase bus lines. And lower the cost because \$2.75 to ride during rush hour is not going to make the money back on a streetcar.

MOTION: *Commissioner Ochs moved to close the public hearing, leave the record open for written testimony until 4:30 p.m. on Monday, January 27, 2014, and to refer the matter back to the Transportation Committee for review and recommendation. Commissioner Ward seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.*

V. Zoning Committee

SITE PLAN REVIEW – List of current applications. (Tom Beach, 651/266-9086)

Three items to come before the Site Plan Review Committee on Tuesday, January 28, 2014:

- Gracewood Senior Living, addition to existing assisted living facility and expand parking lot at 1388 Prior Avenue South.
- Hazeldon, demolish existing residential facility, build new 58 unit community residential facility and expand outpatient clinic. Approximately 55,000 square feet of new construction at 680 Stewart Avenue.
- Caribou Coffee/Bruegger's Bagels, new building for coffee shop and restaurant at 280 West 7th Street.

Two items to come before the Site Plan Review Committee on Tuesday, February 4, 2014:

- St. Thomas University South Campus Facilities Building, operations building for central receiving, recycling, grounds crew etc. at 2115 Summit Avenue.
- Capitol Parking Ramp, New 4-Level parking ramp on site of existing parking lot at 390 Rice Street.

NEW BUSINESS

#13-260-500 Ramsey County Midway Waste Site – Conditional use permit to allow source-separated organics collection. 1943 Pierce Butler Route, NW corner at Prior Avenue.
(Bill Dermody, 651/266-6617)

MOTION: Commissioner Nelson moved the Zoning Committee's recommendation to approve the conditional use permit subject to additional conditions. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.

#13-260-676 Ramsey County Sims at Frank Waste Site – Conditional use permit to allow source-separated organics collection. 0 Case Avenue, property lying SW and SE of the intersection of Duluth Street and Case Avenue. (Bill Dermody, 651/266-6617)

MOTION: Commissioner Nelson moved the Zoning Committee's recommendation to approve the conditional use permit subject to additional conditions. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.

#13-260-295 The Waters Senior Living – Conditional use permit for 1 ft. 2 inches additional building height (46'2" total). 678 Snelling Avenue South, between Scheffer and Eleanor.
(Merritt Clapp-Smith, 651/266-6547)

Commissioner Thao asked if they have already seen that rezoning case or will it be coming to the Planning Commission.

Commissioner Nelson replied yes, it was at the Planning Commission about two meetings ago and they recommended approval of the rezoning to the City Council and the City Council has not as of yet heard and passed that, so it will be contingent upon the City Council making that determination.

Commissioner Ward said that in some of the comments received there was a letter from Mr. Andrew Rose that was written to staff person Merritt Clapp-Smith and in the letter it addresses concern about lighting along the front of this development along Snelling. How will that be addressed and will that be a part of the overall plan review that looks at the site and those requirements?

Commissioner Nelson said that the issue of lighting is not something that really was part of their purview at this particular hearing. If there are any ordinance items that need to be considered to the site plan review and staff still need to consider that, typically the code deals with limiting the amount of lighting that crosses a property line as opposed to large amounts of lighting. Snelling Avenue does have lighting as an arterial street, so staff and the site plan review will be looking at whether there is adequate lighting along that.

MOTION: *Commissioner Nelson moved the Zoning Committee's recommendation to approve the conditional use permit subject to additional conditions. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.*

#13-253-080 The Water Senior Living – Variances for driveway setback and minimum green space per resident in a traditional neighborhood district. 678 Snelling Avenue South, between Scheffer and Eleanor. (Merritt Clapp-Smith, 651/266-6547)

Commissioner Noecker had a question regarding page two of the resolution, which talks about the tension between the Comprehensive Plan goal of greater density along transit and commercial corridors and the green space requirements in traditional neighborhood districts. She would like to know if there is anything that they can do to resolve that tension. Because if they are trying to encourage density in traditional neighborhoods they should consider adjusting the green space requirement or they will continue to see these kinds of variances. So is there a process for talking about that?

Donna Drummond, Planning Director, said that that requirement is unique to senior residences, and that is a requirement which she was not familiar with, and she thinks that it is something they should take a look at.

Commissioner Nelson said that there was discussion regarding that at the hearing and there are a number of considerations that can be made if near a park area, a 300 foot distance that can count towards that green space area. There was discussion about newer techniques that people are proposing, for example, the Shalom project on Victoria Park has a number of roof top terraces and taking a look at different ways of considering the green space. Actually accessible green space to the residence is more important than the green space that they cannot get to, so looking at different aspects was something that came up and was discussed and maybe an agenda item that they look at in the future with regard to that particular item.

MOTION: *Commissioner Nelson moved the Zoning Committee's recommendation to approve the variances subject to additional conditions. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.*

Commissioner Nelson announced the items on the agenda at the next Zoning Committee meeting on Thursday, January 30, 2014.

VI. Comprehensive Planning Committee

Text Amendments to Chapter 64 – Signs – Approve resolution initiating study.
(Jake Reilly, 651/266-6618)

Commissioner Thao said that the action is to approve the resolution to initiate a study about signs particularly as it relates to signs that don't accommodate areas such as the new Lowertown Ballpark. The current chapter references the Midway Stadium as well as other facilities but doesn't specifically name the Lowertown Ballpark. Also, the study will consider signs on the Green Line LRT advertising kiosks, which originally Met Council had not planned for, so the study would update and clarify language in the Zoning Code Chapter 64.

MOTION: *Commissioner Thao moved the Comprehensive Planning Committee's recommendation to approve the resolution initiating a study. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.*

Parkland Dedication and Park Impact Fee Study – Approve resolution initiating a new, broader parkland dedication and park impact fee study. (*Jamie Radel, 651/266-6614 and Allan Torstenson, 651/266-6579*).

Commissioner Thao said that the Committee had looked at this a while ago, and is now coming back with clearer information about the differences and exploring the ways that the fees are going to be set up. There was some change that happened with legislature which gave some more clarifying language definition so the study would then start looking at the implications of this language in the code.

MOTION: *Commissioner Thao moved the Comprehensive Planning Committee's recommendation to approve the resolution initiating a study. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.*

Commissioner Thao reported that at their last meeting they discussed testimony in response to the Transit Street Zoning Amendments public hearing at the January 10th Planning Commission meeting. They also discussed the Parkland Zoning Study, looking at initial issues as staff begins to explore the topic.

VII. Neighborhood Planning Committee

Commissioner Oliver announced that the Neighborhood Planning Committee's next meeting on Wednesday, January 29, 2014 has been cancelled.

VIII. Transportation Committee

Commissioner Ochs reported that at their last meeting they had 3 items on the agenda, the Western Avenue reconstruction and Montreal Avenue reconstruction presented by Public Works staff person Barb Mundahl. The third item was a report on Transportation Planning in the Shepard Davern area presented by Mark Finken, also from the Public Works Department. Commissioner Ochs also announced the items on the agenda for the next Transportation Committee meeting on Monday, January 27, 2014.

IX. Communications Committee

Commissioner Thao announced that the committee will meet immediately after today's Planning Commission to have their annual meeting to review the 2013 report. They will present their report at the next Planning Commission meeting on February 7, 2014.

X. Task Force/Liaison Reports

Commissioner Nelson reported that at the Shepard Davern Task Force last meeting they talked about transportation issues, including the impact of the heavy traffic on that western portion of W. 7th St. and ways to mitigate that, which is an important aspect of anything that occurs down on that gateway into Saint Paul. So coming up with a good solution to that situation is desired on

everyone's part. The task force's work will be wrapping up in about one or two more meetings and the zoning study will continue after that.

Commissioner Reveal announced that the West Side Flats report is not ready, and the final draft is being worked on by staff and consultants. There were two late issues that came up after the entire process was finished. One has to do with height limitations and they are doing several additional view studies to look at it from the Saint Paul Kellogg Park side of the river. Those were requested by Saint Paul Riverfront Corporation and Friends of the Mississippi River. The other issue was the Port Authority's objection to the proposed smaller grid pattern east of Robert so that has been under discussion with staff, but she is not sure where it stands right now.

Donna Drummond, Planning Director, added that Lucy Thompson and Hilary Holmes are doing a little more study and research about what is an appropriate size for a development parcel for more modern industrial uses. They are also trying to interview some business owners from sectors that you would find in those types of parks, asking what they're looking for in terms facilities and property sizes and also contacting a national organization for industrial development to get input. So that information is being gathered and will be brought to the task force.

XI. Old Business

None.

XII. New Business


None.

XIII. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 10:10 a.m.

Recorded and prepared by
Sonja Butler, Planning Commission Secretary
Planning and Economic Development Department,
City of Saint Paul

Respectfully submitted,



Donna Drummond
Planning Director

Approved _____
(Date)

Daniel Ward II
Secretary of the Planning Commission



CITY OF SAINT PAUL
Christopher B. Coleman, Mayor

375 Jackson Street, Suite 220
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55101-1806

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Facsimile: 651-266-9124
Web: www.stpaul.gov/dsi

SITE PLAN REVIEW COMMITTEE

**Tuesday, February 18, 2014
2nd Floor Conference Room
375 Jackson Street, Suite 218**

<u>Time</u>	<u>Project Name and Location</u>
9:00	Schuler Shoes 2083 Ford Parkway New shoe store

Applicants should plan to attend this meeting.

At this meeting you will have a chance to discuss the site plan for your project with Saint Paul's Site Plan Review Committee. The Committee is made up of City staff from Zoning, Traffic, Sewers, Water, Public Works, Fire Inspections, and Parks. You are encouraged to bring your engineer, architect, or contractor with you to handle any technical questions raised by city staff. The purpose of this meeting is to simplify the review process by letting the applicant meet with staff from a number of departments at one time. Staff will make comments and ask questions based on their review of the plans. By the end of the meeting you will know if the site plan can be approved as submitted or if revisions will be required. Staff will take minutes at the meeting and send you a copy.

The meeting room is on the skyway level and 25' to your left as you get out of the elevator.

Parking

A few free parking spaces are available in our visitor parking lot off of 6th Street at Jackson. Parking is also available at on-street meters. The closest parking ramp is on Jackson one block south of our office between 4th and 5th Street.

If you have questions, please contact Tom Beach at 651-266-9086 or tom.beach@ci.stpaul.mn.us.



CITY OF SAINT PAUL
Christopher B. Coleman, Mayor

375 Jackson Street, Suite 220
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55101-1806

Telephone: 651-266-8989
Facsimile: 651-266-9124
Web: www.stpaul.gov/dsi

SITE PLAN REVIEW COMMITTEE

**Tuesday, February 25, 2014
2nd Floor Conference Room
375 Jackson Street, Suite 218**

<u>Time</u>	<u>Project Name and Location</u>
9:00	Carver Auto Sales 1328 Point Douglas Road Expand existing car sales lot
9:40	Form A Feed 637 Barge Channel Road New fertilizer storage/distribution facility with barge unloading operation
10:20	Metro State University East 7 th Street and Maria New 2-story, 27,000 square foot student center (Preliminary meeting)
11:20	Metro State University 400 Maria New parking ramp with 755 spaces

Applicants should plan to attend this meeting.

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Parking

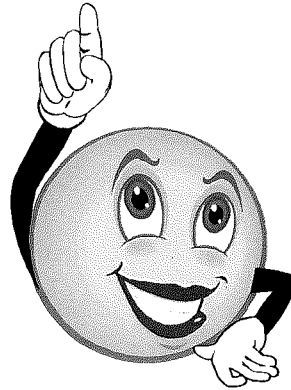
A few free parking spaces are available in our visitor parking lot off of 6th Street at Jackson. Parking is also available at on-street meters. The closest parking ramp is on Jackson one block south of our office between 4th and 5th Street.

If you have questions, please contact Tom Beach at 651-266-9086 or tom.beach@ci.stpaul.mn.us.

**The Zoning Committee
meeting on Thursday,
February 13, 2014
was
CANCELLED**

**The next Zoning
Committee meeting
is Thursday,
February 27, 2014.**

Thank you





CITY OF SAINT PAUL
Christopher B. Coleman, Mayor

*25 West Fourth Street
Saint Paul, MN 55102*

*Telephone: 651-266-6565
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DATE: February 21, 2014
TO: Planning Commission
FROM: Transportation Committee
RE: Citywide Streetcar Feasibility Study

At the Friday, January 24, 2014 public hearing at the Saint Paul Planning Commission, a total of 13 individuals testified on the Citywide Streetcar Feasibility Study. Eight individuals were opposed to the idea of constructing streetcars in Saint Paul; one was in full support; and the remaining four individuals stated neither support nor opposition to the construction of streetcars, but had questions, concerns, or other comments to register on the study or the neighborhoods through which streetcars were studied.

In addition to the testimony offered at the hearing, 229 comments were received via Open Saint Paul (at stpaul.gov/open) regarding the Citywide Streetcar Feasibility Study, in response to three separate forum topics:

What do you think about bringing streetcars back to Saint Paul? Would you like to see them in your neighborhood? Why or why not?

82 comments were registered: 64% were in favor of streetcars, 26% were opposed to streetcars, and 10% stated neither support nor opposition

Which of the seven proposed lines do you believe should be the City of Saint Paul's first priority, and why?

103 comments were registered: 18% believed that none of the proposed corridors should be the first streetcar line, 40% chose West 7th or East 7th as their priority corridor, and 42% chose one of the other five corridors as their priority corridor

If you are unable to attend one of the community open houses for the Citywide Streetcar Feasibility Study, please provide your comments here.

44 comments were registered: 34% were in favor of streetcars, 52% were opposed to streetcars, and 14% stated neither support nor opposition.

The Planning Commission received 39 written comments from four open houses, held in August 2013 and January 2014: 41% were in favor of streetcars, 41% were opposed to streetcars, and 18% stated neither support nor opposition.

Finally, 10 letters and emails were received in response to the Citywide Streetcar Feasibility Study. Two were in favor of streetcars, 6 were in opposition to streetcars, and 2 stated neither support nor opposition.

Below is a summary of the main arguments offered in support of and in opposition to streetcar service for Saint Paul.

Testimony in support:

Common themes of the testimony offered at the public hearing and other comments received in support of streetcars were:

- Need for **improved transit service** in Saint Paul.
 - Decline in desire for, and cost-effectiveness of, personal vehicles in the future.
 - Streetcars are more comfortable and convenient than buses.
 - Rail transit is more reliable than buses are.
- Potential for streetcars to **attract private development and businesses** to the neighborhoods they might run through.
- Streetcars will attract new people to the base of transit riders, and are appealing to both **millennials and retirees** who want to live in cities.
 - Streetcars will help with traffic congestion in the city by getting people out of their cars.
 - Fewer cars in the road will reduce maintenance costs of the roadways.
 - Streetcars can help add to a sense of community and a pedestrian-friendly environment.
- Improved **fuel efficiency and other environmental benefits** from streetcars, both due to the decrease in cars on the road, and because of the ability for an electricity-based transit system to eventually take advantage of more sustainable power sources.
- **Cost efficiencies** because of longevity of equipment and higher capacities for streetcars over buses.

Testimony in opposition:

Common themes of the testimony offered at the public hearing and other comments received in opposition to streetcars were:

- High **capital and operating costs** associated with streetcar service. [This is overwhelmingly the biggest reason why people were opposed to streetcar service for Saint Paul.]
 - Buses do the same thing and cheaper.
 - Taxes, and in particular property taxes, are too high and should not be used for streetcars.
 - The money could be spent on other things, from police to roadway improvements.
 - Subsidies paying for the transit we already have are already too high. Transit should make the City money.
- Potential **construction-related disruptions to businesses** along streets where streetcar lines might be built.
 - The LRT has destroyed University Avenue and streetcars will have similar effects on other streets in Saint Paul.
- Disruption to **views and the streetscape** due to the overhead wire power system.
- **Buses are better than streetcars** because they are more flexible in their routing.
 - The existing bus system isn't well used, as evidenced by half-empty buses.
 - People don't ride buses because they feel unsafe, which could easily be fixed.

Testimony neither in support nor in opposition:

There were quite a number of people who offered comments and testimony who did not take a stance on streetcars, but expressed interest in streetcars with questions about their operations and costs. Common themes of this testimony and these comments were:

- High **capital and operating costs** associated with streetcar service: desire to see a **comparison to bus improvements** which were thought to have the potential to bring similar benefits to Saint Paul with fewer costs.
- **Different network connections** for streetcars from what is included in the proposed long-term network, including connections to Como Park, or routes that loop through neighborhoods without stopping in Downtown.
- How will **significant snow events** impact the operations of streetcars and of the other vehicles and uses of the street?
- How will streetcars operate as part of the **larger regional transit network** including the results of other transit studies? How will they connect with the existing LRT and bus system?

Testimony specific to lines in different neighborhoods:

There was significant testimony and public comment on specific streets or communities. One of the Open Saint Paul questions posted during this study asked: *Which of the seven proposed lines do you believe should be the City of Saint Paul's first priority, and why?* 103 participants posted responses. The results from this question broke down as follows:

- 29% believed that **West 7th Street** should be the first streetcar line.
- 18% believed that **none** of the listed corridors should be the first streetcar line.
- 13% believed that **Selby Avenue** should be the first streetcar line.
- 12% believed that **Grand Avenue** should be the first streetcar line.
- 11% believed that **East 7th Street** should be the first streetcar line.
- 9% believed that **Rice Street** should be the first streetcar line.
- 5% believed that **Robert Street** should be the first streetcar line.
- 3% believed that **Payne Avenue** should be the first streetcar line.

A letter submitted by the Grand Avenue Business Association showed the results of a poll taken of their member organizations. 75% of those polled were opposed to streetcars on Grand Avenue, and 64% were opposed to streetcars in general.

A letter submitted by Minnesota Public Radio urged the City to avoid a route on West 7th Street in front of their facilities.

Summary:

The testimony received regarding streetcars in Saint Paul was extremely varied, and included comments that were passionate on both the pro- and con- sides of this topic. The most frequent comments in support of building streetcars in Saint Paul were for the benefits of both an improved transit system, and for strengthening economic development in the city. The most common comment opposing streetcars was that they are an expensive investment, both in the capital and the operating costs. The most frequent question was whether or not buses would be able to achieve the same objectives as those stated for streetcars, but at a lower price.

The goals of the Citywide Streetcar Feasibility Study were to determine whether streetcars would be feasible in Saint Paul, to determine where they would work the best to achieve both improved transit connectivity and increased economic development activity, and to identify a good starting line for the City. The consulting team determined that streetcars would be feasible in this operating environment, that streetcars would help achieve the stated objectives (of transit connectivity improvement and economic development) on seven routes through Saint Paul, and that the line with most potential to realize those objectives is on East and West 7th Street. This public participation process showed that though there is a strong base of support for streetcar development in Saint Paul, many residents and business owners have concerns about the high cost of this investment.

Transportation Committee Recommendation:

The Transportation Committee has served as the steering committee for the Streetcar Feasibility Study, and has reviewed the study on the following occasions:

October 29, 2012	Streetcars 101 and Evaluation Criteria
November 4, 2012	Evaluation Criteria
February 11, 2013	Phase 1 Screening
May 20, 2013	Phase 2 Evaluation: process update
July 29, 2013	Phase 2 Evaluation: Long-Term Network
November 18, 2013	Phase 3 Summary: Starter Line Proposal
February 10, 2014	Review of Public Comment and Recommendation to the Planning Commission

The Transportation Committee recommends to the Planning Commission two separate items:

- Approval of the long-term network of feasible streetcar routes for Saint Paul, including 7 lines: East 7th, Grand, Payne, Rice, Robert, Selby, and West 7th; and
- Authorization for staff to proceed to a more detailed analysis of the Starter Line corridor, *comparing the potential benefits of streetcars to enhanced bus service*, specifically for East-West 7th Street from Arcade to Randolph, with the purpose and intent to:
 - Improve transit connectivity;
 - Enhance the attractiveness of transit service; and
 - Catalyze development through transit investment.

This next study will include (among other elements) an examination and recommendation for routing through Downtown Saint Paul; a more detailed analysis of capital, operating, and lifecycle costs; and an economic development potential breakdown, including a close study of the impacts of modern streetcar lines in other cities in the United States.



CITY OF SAINT PAUL
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Streetcars in Saint Paul

February 2014

Why study streetcars in Saint Paul?

- The City of Saint Paul's Comprehensive Plan, adopted by the City Council in 2010, directs staff to "study the feasibility and possible location of new streetcar lines."
- Public transit is increasingly important to the younger work force and to employers looking to attract talent, and also serves the growing population of seniors in the city. Streetcars have performed well in other U.S. cities (such as Portland and Seattle) by improving the overall transportation system and serving as an economic catalyst.
- The City is interested in learning whether streetcars might be an appropriate tool in Saint Paul as well.

What are streetcars, and how are they different from buses and light rail vehicles?

- Streetcar systems are comprised rail vehicles, with rails embedded in the street and overhead power wires, much like light rail systems.
- Streetcars operate in mixed traffic, like buses, instead of in a dedicated lane, like light rail.
- Streetcars provide many of the benefits of light rail with lesser impacts and at a lower cost:
 - Streetcars typically do not require the removal of on-street parking, except at locations where new transit stops may be desired.
 - Streetcar vehicles have higher capacities than buses, and therefore can move people more efficiently.
 - Streetcars attract people because the line is viewed as a 'permanent' form of transit they can count on for long-term housing and employment decisions.

Why build streetcars in Saint Paul?

- Transportation has always been about more than just moving people around. Roads and highways funded by subsidies beyond the gas tax also create economic growth.
- Rail transit has a better record than buses as an attractor of economic activity, including both jobs and people. The Citywide Streetcar Feasibility Study has shown that there are select corridors where streetcars could enhance the existing transit system as well as spur economic development.

What is the regional context for streetcars in Saint Paul?

- Saint Paul is projected to gain an additional 40,000 residents by 2040, as stated by the Metropolitan Council, and consistent with trends seen across the country.
- Just as roadway projects across the region and the state have supported sub- and ex-urban growth over the last fifty years, streetcars are a tool that can be used to support the growing density of population in the region's core cities.
- If the City of Saint Paul can accommodate more people, the region is spared the expense of new infrastructure for, and the added congestion that comes with, substantial new ex-urban expansion.
- This sort of rail transportation investment is necessary to the region so that it can avoid falling further behind competitor regions like Denver, Salt Lake City, and Dallas.

This is an expensive project and we don't know where funding to build streetcar lines is coming from; why are we doing this?

- This study identified seven lines where streetcar service is feasible and could bring transit and economic development benefits to Saint Paul residents, workers, and visitors.
- Transportation projects require a lot of careful planning and analysis, to assure the best results for the community and the region. They often take substantial time to evaluate and design, and require multiple sources of funding.
- At this time, the City does not know what funding sources may be available in the future, and so it would be speculative to try to define how the financing might be done. (This is as true for major highway projects as it is for transit ones.)
- It is important that the City continue moving through the analysis process so that it does not miss any funding opportunities in the future.

What comes next, and when might the City make a decision whether to proceed or not?

- A public hearing for the Citywide Streetcar Feasibility Study was held at the January 24 Planning Commission meeting. The Transportation Committee met on February 10 to review the public testimony, and to make a recommendation back to the Planning Commission. The Planning Commission will consider the Transportation Committee's recommendation before passing a resolution and sending the report to the City Council.
- The study recommends that further analysis be conducted on the proposed starter line corridor, East and West 7th Streets from Arcade to Randolph. This analysis will compare streetcar service and an enhanced bus service for that corridor and will include more precise estimates of capital, operating and lifecycle costs, potential economic development impacts, and projected ridership.
- This detailed analysis would take approximately two years to complete. Once finalized, the City will decide whether to proceed with the implementation of the starter streetcar line and if so, how the capital and operating costs will be financed.

For more information visit: www.stpaul.gov/streetcars

city of saint paul
planning commission resolution
file number _____
date _____

Streetcar Feasibility Study

WHEREAS, the *Saint Paul Comprehensive Plan* includes strategy 2.10 Study the feasibility and possible location of new streetcar lines, to help provide balance and choice to the system; and

WHEREAS, the Saint Paul Department of Planning and Economic Development engaged a team of consultants from Nelson\Nygaard, HDR and Richardson Richter and Associates in a technical Streetcar Feasibility Study, and identified a network of feasible routes as well as a priority corridor; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission, on December 6, 2013, released the draft study and recommendations for public review and set a public hearing for January 24, 2014; and

WHEREAS, notice of the hearing was published pursuant to Minnesota Statute § 462.357, Subd. 3, and mailed to the early notification system list and other interested parties; and

WHEREAS, public testimony was accepted via Open Saint Paul and at two Open Houses held on January 15th and 16th, 2014; and,

WHEREAS, a public hearing on the Streetcar Feasibility Study was conducted by the Planning Commission on January 24, 2014, at which all persons present were allowed to testify; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission referred the draft study and conclusions to the Transportation Committee for consideration, review of the public testimony, and recommendations; and

WHEREAS, on February 10, 2014, the Transportation Committee forwarded its recommendations to the Planning Commission; and

moved by _____
seconded by _____
in favor _____
against _____

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission considered the public testimony and the recommendations of the Transportation Committee;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Planning Commission recommends approval of the long-term network of feasible streetcar routes for Saint Paul, including 7 lines: East 7th, Grand, Payne, Rice, Robert, Selby, and West 7th; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Planning Commission recommends authorization for staff to proceed to a more detailed analysis of the Starter Line corridor, *comparing the potential benefits of streetcars to enhanced bus service*, specifically for East-West 7th Street from Arcade to Randolph, with the purpose and intent to:

- Improve transit connectivity;
- Enhance the attractiveness of transit service; and
- Catalyze development through transit investment.

This next study will include (among other elements) an examination and recommendation for routing through Downtown Saint Paul; a more detailed analysis of capital, operating, and lifecycle costs; and an economic development potential breakdown, including a close study of the impacts of modern streetcar lines in other cities in the United States; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Planning Commission forwards these recommendations and public testimony to the Mayor and City Council for their consideration.



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Saint Paul Planning Commission Retreat – January 10, 2004, 9-11AM
Room 40 of City Hall

Parking – Current Policies and Directions for the Future

Presentations from PED staff

Citywide Parking Requirements Zoning Study, Merritt Clapp-Smith

In 2009, the City began a zoning study of off-street parking requirements. In general, there was a desire to shift parking requirements from that meeting peak parking demand, to requirements that meet average parking demands. The goals of the study were to consolidate the use requirements for off-street parking, reduce the requirements, enhance parking lot design, and simplify the City parking code. The new off-street parking requirements for commercial and office uses were reduced to one space per 400 square feet. After additional study, restaurant requirements were similarly reduced to one per 400 square feet (for establishments closing by midnight), while bars maintained a higher parking requirement of one space per 150 square feet (for establishments that close by 2AM). Parking maximums were established at 170% for most commercial and office uses, and 300% for restaurants. Minimum requirements were eliminated in station areas along Central Corridor in T-(traditional neighborhood) districts. Additional landscaping requirements were put in place, and TDM (travel demand management) planning is now required for developments with in excess of 100 parking spaces.

As a result of these changes to parking requirements, fewer variance applications have been filed, saving the City both money and staff time, and easing the burden on staff and district councils.

Central Corridor Zoning Study Parking Approach & Parking Program, Anton Jerve

With the construction of the Central Corridor LRT system, there was a loss of 80% of on-street parking in the project area: 50% due to engineering and 30% for additional LRT stations and to enhance pedestrian access to the system. The Central Corridor parking study focused on 11 critical areas with a disproportional loss of on-street parking. 12 workshops with community members and business owners were held, to identify concerns and identify opportunities to coordinate facilities. A grant program was set up, using tax-increment funding, STAR and CIB funds, for parking lot improvements along Central Corridor. Technical assistance was available for all applicants through Central Corridor Funders' Collaborative funding. Alley improvements were also included, with the Met Council Central Corridor Project Office repaving many alleys in the area for access during construction.

The zoning study revised the City's T-districts and added a new T-4 (higher density) zoning district. Parking minimums were removed within a quarter mile of the stations in T-districts, and parking maximums were lowered. In these areas, the market is building approximately 60-75% of the citywide parking minimums. To encourage structured parking over surface lots, there is no maximum for structured parking lots. Furthermore, parking built above or below useable floors counts towards the FAR (floor area ratio) requirements for the development. 50% of facades at street level must be retail or office space for commercial structured parking. This work along Central Corridor demonstrated the need

for good pedestrian access between businesses and the parking behind the buildings, and for combining parking and stormwater management efficiently.

Parking Management Districts, theory and practice, Craig Blakely

Parking is often the primary barrier to transit oriented developments, which are encouraged in many of the City's adopted plans. New strategies for integrated parking improvement and management can help overcome this barrier. These new strategies are anchored in the ideas of the city planner Donald Shoup, who wrote *The High Cost of Free Parking*, and whose ideas have been most fully implemented in Old Pasadena. In brief, he believes market forces are the best way to allocate parking supply and demand, that the quality of the parking is more important than the quantity, that pay parking makes a commercial area more competitive, that revenue from pay parking on the street can be used to pay for some amount of "free" off street parking, and that Parking Improvement Districts (where the costs of shared parking can be equitably assessed on the benefitting property owners) can become the impetus for creating more comprehensive Business Improvement Districts (which can finance above standard safety, cleanliness, and marketing activities). Such integrated strategies have made Old Pasadena increasingly competitive with suburban shopping malls with tons of "free" parking.

Key to implementing integrated parking strategies is using new technologies such as license plate recognition to better enforce on-street parking regulations. Unfortunately, parking management in the City is divided among the police, public works, and planning and economic development departments. As a result, parking management is reactive, not pro-active, and never sustained enough to become a market force that can change parker behavior.

There are some ways that the Saint Paul Planning Commission could play a role in educating the public and policy makers about these innovative strategies:

- Revise the Zoning Code to allow an annual fee paid into a Parking Improvement District to satisfy a parking shortfall resulting from a change of use (such as Cupcake last year).
- Revise the Zoning Code to allow validated parking on the street to count towards the required parking, as evidenced by receipts from pay parking kiosks that are validated by the business.
- Encourage City departments and policy makers to improve its fragmented parking management system by using new computerized technologies and reorganizing parking management responsibilities that are now scattered among separate departments.
- Study ways to accelerate TOD on the commercial side of "The Line of Change" (where the alley defines the boundary between residential and commercial zones), by developing integrated strategies to improve the residential side as well, for without them, the residential side of that line will continue to decay.
- Encourage other planning agencies like the Metropolitan Council to consider revising some of their grant programs (such as the Livable Communities Development Account) to allow integrated investments in shared parking infrastructure that can accelerate TOD in the future.

Response Panel and Discussion

Moderator:

Jon Commers founded and operates Saint Paul-based Donjek, an economics and strategy consulting office supporting redevelopment through finance and partnerships. In 2011 Jon was appointed to the Metropolitan Council, where he is a member of the Transportation and Community Development Committees, and is directly involved with development of the Thrive MSP 2040 plan. Previously, he benefited from six years of service on the Saint Paul Planning Commission, where he was elected chair. He lives in Saint Paul with his wife Beth and their school-age children.

Panelists:

Beth Elliott is a Principal City Planner in the Department of Community Planning and Economic Development [CPED] for the City of Minneapolis. Her main focus is to provide coordination of a wide variety of Downtown planning initiatives to maintain consistency with the city's long-range planning policies. Her work includes partnering with community and inter-agency stakeholders addressing land use issues, redevelopment, and public improvements as well as to develop small area plans for specific parts of the Downtown sector. Her current projects vary widely from representing City interests for the Southwest LRT planning and engineering analysis to redevelopment and public realm efforts on the east side of Downtown. Beth has a Masters in Urban and Regional Planning from the Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs at the University of Minnesota. She is a member of the American Planning Association and the Urban Land Institute as well as certified through the American Institute of Certified Planners.

Thomas Fisher is a Professor in the School of Architecture and Dean of the College of Design at the University of Minnesota, having previously served as the Editorial Director of Progressive Architecture magazine. With degrees in architecture from Cornell and intellectual history from Case Western Reserve, he was recognized in 2005 as the fifth most published architecture writer in the U.S., with 7 books, 47 book chapters or introductions, and over 325 articles.

Rob Stolpestad is President and an owner of Saint Paul-based Exeter Realty Company which he joined in 1993. Since 2009 he has also been Chief Financial Manager and a Founding Governor of Ironston Asset Fund LLC and Ironston Management LLC.

Mr. Stolpestad's past and present professional and community affiliations include member of the City of Saint Paul Business Review Council; member of the Board of Directors for the St. Paul Blackhawks Soccer Club; member of the Twin Cities Advisory Board of U.S. Bank; Governmental Relations State Committee Chair for the International Council of Shopping Centers; Co-Chair of the Legislative Committee of the Minnesota Shopping Center Association; and member of the Executive Committee and Board of Directors of the Minnesota Children's Museum.

Mr. Stolpestad has a Master of Business Administration degree in Finance and International Business from the Carlson School of Management at the University of Minnesota and a Bachelor of Arts degree in History and Political Science from Northwestern University, Evanston, IL. He is a licensed real estate broker. Mr. Stolpestad lives in Saint Paul with his wife and two boys.

In their introductions, each panelist described how parking, in various forms, influences their work. Beth Elliott's career has focused on downtown and Uptown Minneapolis, and in particular is now focusing on how to realize higher and better uses for the surface parking downtown, and how to deal with a perimeter of structured parking. Rob Stolpestad's company, Exeter Realty, has developed a wide range of properties in Saint Paul, and for all of them parking is essential. Easing requirements makes it easier for developers, but despite the reduction in requirements for parking, the market (and potential lenders) still often mandates the building of parking capacity. Tom Fisher brought up the generational and technological shift for the "millennial" generation, who value their cell phones over car ownership. Flexibility will be key with these changes, and adaptable parking structure that might one day be converted to other uses, are one way bring that flexibility to cities. Fisher stated that parking has been a disaster to urbanism, but that people are moving back into dense urban cities, and that cities need to be designed for the residents of these cities and not for bureaucratic processes.

Question from Jon Commers: With the real estate market demanding off-street parking inventory, can renters and buyers who don't want or need an off-street parking space opt out? And how will this be addressed in the future? And is the lack of need for off-street parking a generational shift, or is it general across market segments?

Rob Stolpestad stated that in most of the newer multi-family development, parking costs are separate from rental costs. However, this is harder to do for commercial spaces. The multi-family market is still

strong, and it is largely being driven by millennials and by aging baby boomers who are retiring and downsizing. It is difficult to appeal to both groups, because not only do millennials want smaller units while retirees want more space, the two groups have different parking needs as well, with millennials typically being more desirous of a car-lite lifestyle.

Question from Jon Commers: Downtown Minneapolis has a lot of surface parking right now, and Donald Shoup, who we heard about in an earlier presentation, says that cars are in use approximately 5% of the time. This is a low-productivity use. What is Minneapolis doing to address this?

Beth Elliot discussed the "East Downtown Surface Parking Study" that the City conducted using a HUD Sustainable Communities grant through the Met Council. With the high rate of residential growth happening in Downtown Minneapolis, the City wanted to know why the area around the Metro Dome was relatively stagnant. There proved to be a number of development barriers on the surface commercial lots in the area. HRNA was hired to study the lots' owners, and found that a large number of owners were multi-generational families for whom these lots have been money-making businesses for many years and who see them as long-term money-making endeavors. These owners need to be a part of the development deals for these lots, so that they can continue to have a business on the site. Furthermore, the study showed that developers need the City to amenitize the Elliot Park neighborhood, or subsidize parking, because of the high land prices in the area. This can be seen with what is currently being worked out for the Ryan development downtown.

Question from Commissioner Ward: As policies shift from requiring developments to provide a sea of parking, to encouraging shared parking arrangements, how does this impact the sale of property later? Developers do need to consider exit strategies when making deals, and Rob Stoplestad stated that a clear ownership structure can help clarify the situation for the next guy. Having control over enough parking to meet the code, or having an easement of some sort, is easiest for resale. Beth Elliot stated that parking does not seem to hold back the turnover for Minneapolis' smaller businesses reusing small spaces. Tom Fischer mentioned that a way to plan for diminished need for off-street parking would be to build structured parking that can one day be converted to another use.

Commissioner Thao asked how the panel sees the evolution of living wage job centers that are often located in the suburbs, where there is often a large amount of surface parking provided and where it can be hard for transit-reliant lower income workers to get to.

Beth Elliot acknowledged that the transit system needs to accommodate the reverse commute, and that there should be a focus on feeder buses as well as the trunk lines.

Commissioner Oliver asked what the panel sees as the future of residential areas, of which there are many in Saint Paul, where there are many single family homes mixed with old apartment buildings which typically have little to no off-street parking for their residents.

In Elliot's experience, people move to these neighborhoods knowing what they are getting into, and that shared parking to accommodate spillover demand can help. Tom Fischer mentioned that the denser parts of the cities were laid out before cars were as dominant as they are today, and that with the shift to online retail and even food, the cities will be seeing a transition away from the need for so many cars.

Commissioner Ochs said that with the movement of retail out of the central cities into the suburbs, more people are reliant on personal vehicles for errands and all shopping. What does it take and cost to build structured parking versus surface lots in the City?

Beth Elliot referred the Commissioner to David King at Columbia University, who has researched extensively the finances of structured and surface parking. Rob Stoplestad said that all parking

development is expensive, from surface to above ground to below ground (in order of cost). If the owner of whatever parking can charge for the parking space, this makes the development of structured parking more feasible to cover real estate taxes. Craig Blakely mentioned that the City could lease parking and create an assessment district as a partner with the business community, to help with guaranteed financing to cover those costs.

Commissioner Edgerton asked what is the best practice with shared infrastructure, particularly in the context of combining stormwater management and parking for shared stacked infrastructure.

Tom Fischer observed that the region uses infrastructure very inefficiently, and that more intensity and stacked uses is the future, particularly as people continue to move back into central cities. This population shift is not a trend, and we will not be able to afford status quo growth.

Beth Elliot said that the government can help with this through regulations and requirements—through practical things with tiny details.

Commissioner Spaulding asked about having an effective community conversation, and what role the Commission can play in that task, particularly when it comes to uses of parking meter money, and incentivizing flexible ramp design and structured parking development, which are all concepts the general public may not have a strong grasp of right now.

Jon Commers mentioned that when he was on the Saint Paul Planning Commission, he felt that the work the Commission did on parking was some of the most significant work that he had the chance to work on. With the development of the Green Line LRT, there was not a lot of pushback on the elimination of parking requirements. Clearly the message that parking is not free, that it is a public or private investment, is out there. The question is who will commit which resources, and what will be the commitment to parking use?

Loring Park, in Minneapolis, is a very dense, well-connected neighborhood with little parking. Beth Elliot said that a developer proposed (and is now building) a tower there with a permitted amount of parking, but that the neighborhood wanted more parking included in the project than the zoning code would allow. It only took one planning commissioner to stand up for the code and City policy and say, no we will not allow over-building parking here, and back up the staff. Jon Commers added that incremental change with the demand for higher density housing will provide a lot of opportunity, and with that the region will benefit. Tom Fischer remarked that it is important to consider the real cost of parking, because right now there are a lot of freeloaders on the “free” parking system.

